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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Senate of the State of Illinois were deeply saddened to learn of the death of their friend and former colleague, State Senator Margaret Smith of Chicago, on Monday, May 16, 2005; and

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WHEREAS, She was born Margaret Fort in Chicago and spent her life helping others; she graduated from DuSable High School in Chicago, was educated at Tennessee State University, and was a member of the Chicago Baptist Institute, where she received an honorary doctor of humanities degree; in 1955, she married Fred Smith, a longtime legislator who was known as "Dean of the Senate" before he retired in 1979; he preceded her in death in 1988; and

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WHEREAS, Senator Margaret Smith spent 22 years in the Illinois General Assembly; she was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1980 and served one two-year term; she won election to the Senate in 1982 and was re-elected by overwhelming margins for the next 20 years; and

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WHEREAS, During her 20 years in the Senate, she served as the chairwoman of the influential Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, where she had the distinction of being the first female State Senator in the U.S. to serve as the chairperson of the same committee chaired earlier by her spouse the minority spokesperson on the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, and as the Democratic Caucus Chair; and

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WHEREAS, She also served on the Senate Committees on Appropriations, Commerce and Industry, Insurance and Pensions, Executive Appointments, the Legislative Space Needs Commission, the Legislative Printing Unit, the Committee of Women Legislators (COWL), the Advisory Board of the Illinois Sports Facility Authority, the Legislative Black Caucus, the

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1 Anti-Crime Advisory Committee, and the Illinois Steering  
2 Committee for Public Health's Turning Point; and

3 WHEREAS, Senator Smith served the State of Illinois well as  
4 a member of the National Conference of Black State Legislators,  
5 the Midwestern Legislative Conference, where she served on the  
6 Health and Human Services Committee and the Committee on  
7 Children, and the National Conference of State Legislators  
8 (NCSL), where she once served as the chairperson of the NCSL's  
9 Health and Human Services Committee; and

10 WHEREAS, Senator Smith amassed numerous legislative  
11 accomplishments which enhanced the quality of life for the  
12 people in the Third Senate District and of the people of  
13 Illinois, including requiring the State to cover the cost of  
14 mammograms for poor women, requiring insurance companies to  
15 cover mammograms, protecting senior citizens in nursing homes  
16 and assisted living facilities, allowing public aid recipients  
17 making the transition from welfare to work to receive Medicaid  
18 services for 12 months, improving the child immunization system  
19 in Illinois, assisting women with ovarian and cervical cancer,  
20 mandating businesses to provide an on-site location other than  
21 a rest room for working mothers to express milk to feed their  
22 infants during office hours, and improving business  
23 opportunities for women and minorities; and

24 WHEREAS, She was recognized for her sponsorship and support  
25 of legislation on health care and women's issues and was the  
26 recipient of the coveted "Legislator of the Year Award" from  
27 every major public health organization in Illinois, including  
28 the Illinois Nurses' Association, the Illinois Health Care  
29 Association, and the Illinois Hospital and Health Systems  
30 Association; and

31 WHEREAS, Senator Smith is the author of legislation  
32 commissioning the creation of statues of Adelbert H. Roberts,

1 the first African American to serve in the State legislature,  
2 and Dr. Martin L. King Jr., as well as the portrait of her late  
3 husband, Senator Fred J. Smith, all of which are on display in  
4 the State Capitol and its complex in Springfield; and

5 WHEREAS, Margaret Smith was known as "Lady of the Senate"  
6 and is remembered for her class, benevolence, and humor; she  
7 was dedicated to her church and faith and made numerous mission  
8 trips abroad; she visited Africa, Europe, and Asia; in  
9 recognition of her work, a school in Haiti was named after her;  
10 she was a board member of the Ada S. McKinley Foundation and  
11 Beatrice Caffrey Youth Service; she was a member of Sigma Gamma  
12 Rho Sorority, Inc., Metropolitan Business and Professional  
13 Women International, and Bethsaida Missionary Baptist Church;  
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn the passing of  
17 our friend and former colleague, Senator Margaret Smith, who  
18 spent a well-lived life dedicated to championing the needs of  
19 others; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
21 presented to her family as an expression of our sincere sorrow  
22 for this loss.